

which said loud and clear: Our country supports the men and women in uniform; not only do we support those brave souls who are sacrificing on our behalf, but we want to thank their parents and their families for their dedication as well.

As Secretary Rumsfeld said, we're making progress. We will stay on task until we've achieved our objective, which is to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and free the Iraqi people so they can live in a society that is hopeful and democratic and at peace in its neighborhood.

All of us involved here in Washington are extremely proud of the skill and bravery of our young Americans who are willing to sacrifice for something greater than themselves.

So it's my honor to welcome the Members here. We will continue to keep them briefed as this war progresses. And I want to thank them for the unity, the message of unity.

Thank you all for coming.

Secretary Rumsfeld's Briefing

Q. Is Saddam dead or alive, sir?

The President. Secretary Rumsfeld will be briefing today.

Q. Do you want to give us any details, as the Commander in Chief, of how things are going?

The President. Secretary Rumsfeld will be briefing today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of the Budget Resolution

March 21, 2003

As we engage in action to ensure freedom and security, it is imperative that we stay focused on important domestic priorities, including creating jobs and strengthening economic growth at home. With passage of the budget resolution, the House has spoken clearly that future economic growth and job creation requires passing the bold plan that I proposed. I commend the House for its timely action and look forward to working with Congress to ensure that we fund our

priorities, enact policies to spur growth, and restrain spending.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of Military Operations Against Iraq

March 21, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On March 18, 2003, I made available to you, consistent with section 3(b) of the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243), my determination that further diplomatic and other peaceful means alone will neither adequately protect the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq, nor lead to enforcement of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.

I have reluctantly concluded, along with other coalition leaders, that only the use of armed force will accomplish these objectives and restore international peace and security in the area. I have also determined that the use of armed force against Iraq is consistent with the United States and other countries continuing to take the necessary actions against international terrorists and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations, or persons who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. United States objectives also support a transition to democracy in Iraq, as contemplated by the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-338).

Consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), I now inform you that pursuant to my authority as Commander in Chief and consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243), I directed U.S. Armed Forces, operating with other coalition forces, to commence combat operations on March 19, 2003, against Iraq.

These military operations have been carefully planned to accomplish our goals with the minimum loss of life among coalition military forces and to innocent civilians. It is not possible to know at this time either the duration of active combat operations or the scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to accomplish our goals fully.

As we continue our united efforts to disarm Iraq in pursuit of peace, stability, and security both in the Gulf region and in the United States, I look forward to our continued consultation and cooperation.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Persons Who Commit, Threaten To
Commit, or Support Terrorism**

March 21, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith the 6-month periodic report prepared by my Administration on the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism that was declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 21, 2003.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Digest of Other
White House Announcements**

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 15

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom to discuss the situation in Iraq.

Also in the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

March 16

In the morning, the President traveled to Lajes Field Air Force Base in the Azores, Portugal, where, in the evening, he had dinner with Prime Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of Portugal, President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

March 17

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, and King Juan Carlos of Spain to discuss the situation in Iraq.

Also in the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings and met with the National Security Council and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to discuss possible military action against Iraq.

In the evening, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with members of Congress to discuss the situation in Iraq.